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Letter dated 7 December 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the statement made on 6 December 1994 by the President of the Azerbaijani Republic Heydar Aliyev, at the Budapest Summit Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its attachment distributed as a document of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, under agenda item 70, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Eldar G. KULIYEV
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement made by the President of Azerbaijan on 6 December 1994 at the Budapest Summit Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

The Azerbaijani people attaches great importance to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and expects a great deal of the present meeting. The signature of the CSCE Final Act at Helsinki in 1975 had a positive long-term effect on the course of peace processes and became one of the harbingers of the radical changes that have taken place in the world in recent years. The political map of the world has changed and new sovereign States members of CSCE have emerged, including my own country - independent Azerbaijan.

Under current conditions, the role and significance of CSCE are constantly increasing. The new Europe, a Europe without dividing lines and spheres of influence, needs an improved CSCE. There is an urgent need to revitalize the activity of CSCE and transform it into an effective instrument capable of extending real support to the processes of democratization and protection of human rights, decisively thwarting aggressive actions or plans which could harm the freedom and independence of young States that have not yet consolidated themselves, assisting in the restoration of stability in the hot spots on our continent, and becoming one of the foundations of the new structure of security in Europe following the ending of the cold war.

The Azerbaijani Republic, having proclaimed its independence, is resolutely embarked on the course of creating a democratic State with a market economy, a multiparty system and legislation which guarantees human rights and personal freedom. Despite the real complexity of the transition period and the consequences of the six-year war that has been thrust upon us, we have already travelled a significant way along this road and are convinced that we shall obtain the objectives we have set ourselves.

Azerbaijan has become a participant in the NATO "Partnership for Peace" programme, and is strictly pursuing a policy of discharge of its international obligations in the sphere of disarmament and arms control, including those under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

We are also doing everything possible to accelerate the process of economic integration into the world community as an equal partner, and developing close cooperation both with our neighbours and with all countries of the world.

A clear example of this is the signature on 20 September this year of a contract with a number of major world companies on the joint exploitation of oilfields in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea. I wish to note particularly the fact that a number of participants in this major investment project are countries that form part of CSCE - the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Turkey and Norway. I hope this agreement will be conducive to closer ties

between the countries and peoples participating in the consortium, and to the strengthening of stability and cooperation in Europe in general.

The participants in this Conference are aware that, six years ago, aggression was committed against our Republic with a view to seizing a part of it, namely Nagorny Karabakh. The Republic of Armenia and the Armenian separatists in Nagorny Karabakh have directed an active military campaign against the territorial integrity of our State. Following the seizure of the town of Shushi and the Lachin region of Azerbaijan, what is in essence taking place is the annexation of Nagorny Karabakh. Dozens of human settlements in Nagorny Karabakh inhabited by more than 50,000 Azerbaijanis have been destroyed and burned. Using Nagorny Karabakh as a bridgehead, Armenian armed units have occupied six other regions of Azerbaijan - the Kelbajar, Agdam, Fizuli, Djebrail, Zangelan and Kubatly regions, which are beyond the borders of Nagorny Karabakh and cover four times its area.

As a result of the aggression, more than 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory has been occupied. More than 20,000 of my fellow-countrymen have perished, about 100,000 have been wounded or maimed, 6,000 have been taken prisoner, and more than 1 million Azerbaijanis - about 15 per cent of the Republic's population - have been driven from their places of birth and are now living in camps, where their most basic needs are not being met. In the occupied Azerbaijani territories, 700 towns and villages have been destroyed, all the homes, schools and hospitals have been burnt and plundered, and the monuments of the ancient culture have been destroyed.

The hopes of the people of Azerbaijan were greatly raised by the decision by CSCE, in the spring of 1992, to set up the Minsk Group to settle the conflict. The Group's membership comprises not only the parties to the conflict - Armenia and Azerbaijan - but also nine of the world's influential countries. We are very grateful for the action taken by the Group, which has carried out important work over the past two years.

I should also make special mention of the mediation carried out by the Russian Federation, as a result of whose efforts, with the support of the CSCE, the cease-fire has now held for seven months and no blood has been spilt. A cease-fire is not, however, the same thing as peace. Unless a political agreement which takes account both of the interests of the parties and of international legal standards is concluded, there can be no just or lasting peace. Taking the cease-fire as our starting-point, we are working intensively to achieve agreement on and acceptance of this document.

I should like to make it clear that the Azerbaijani Republic has adopted a totally peace-loving and constructive approach in this process. Despite the grave consequences of aggression, we offer the Armenians peace, on the basis of justice and humanity, the principles of the CSCE and United Nations Security Council resolutions.

We are prepared to offer guarantees of safety to the Armenian inhabitants of Nagorny Karabakh and we are agreeable to deployment in the conflict area of CSCE peace-keeping forces. We are also prepared to discuss the status of Nagorny Karabakh within the Azerbaijani State so that the Armenian national

minority can exercise their rights and transport links between the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia can function normally. But we must stand firm on some standards and principles: the inviolability of frontiers, the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the withdrawal of Armenian armed units from all occupied territories and the return of refugees to their homes.

At the present time it is the unwillingness of the aggressor to implement Security Council resolutions and to agree to withdraw its armed units from all occupied Azerbaijani territory that prevents the attainment of a political agreement.

Much also depends on reconciling the different views of the members of the Minsk Group and on uniting their efforts to ensure peace and stability between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

We welcome the efforts of the Chairman-in-Office of CSCE to organize an international peace-keeping force to regulate the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. I thank all those countries which answered the Chairman's call, and I urge everyone to cooperate with him in this noble work.

The Budapest Meeting provides a unique opportunity to achieve a breakthrough in settling the conflict. I appeal to the Heads of States participating in CSCE to take an active role in this matter, to help extinguish the flames of this six-year-old war which has brought pain and suffering to my people - to millions of people - and thus give effect to the fundamental principles of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to which we all solemnly affixed our signatures.